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June 9, 2021

Comments related to SB347/AB341

relating to: captive wildlife in facilities holding a U.S. Department of Agriculture exhibitor license.

These comments are being submitted on behalf of the Sierra Club Wisconsin and its 20,000 members in Wisconsin who care about proper, science-based management of Wisconsin wildlife and other natural resources.

SB 347 would remove the stewardship of Wisconsin wildlife out of the hands of the experts of our own state by exempting facilities with a USDA license from state license requirements. The responsibility for captive native Wisconsin wildlife should remain with the Wisconsin agencies accountable to citizen public health concerns and most familiar with the potential biological and ecological implications of captive wildlife operations.

SB347 will deny DNR access to information about the presence and health of wild animals in captivity in WI facilities. It will exclude DNR from information and inspections that could protect the health of native WI wildlife and human health.

We need to move towards science-based, ethical management of Wisconsin wildlife; other states are moving forward with laws that strengthen protections consistent with public health and science, we should not be doing the opposite.